

## FAR NORTHERN REGIONAL CENTER CORONAVIRUS WELLNESS PROJECT FOR ADULT DAY PROGRAMS, RESIDENTIAL AND SLS PROVIDERS

The Coronavirus has ravaged the world for over 18 months now, taking lives and changing the way we all live. A vaccine was quickly developed and made available to all Americans in December 2020, which slowed the virus for several months until a new Delta Variant of the Coronavirus emerged. This variant has put many at risk again as the new virus mutations are more dangerous and virulent than the original strain.

Many people continue to have concerns and doubts about COVID-19 vaccinations despite the evidence that they are safe and effective. This has resulted in lower vaccination rates for direct care staff and the consumers in our service system. This in turn affects the quality of life for consumers, threatens the livelihood of service providers, and is limiting the services they can provide.

While the Federal Government, CDC, State of California, State and Local Public Health Departments, Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing, and Department of Developmental Services all provide pandemic guidelines, many differ from each other causing confusion and mistrust. They all agree on one thing: vaccinations are the thing that can stop or slow down the Coronavirus spread.

Regional center services are greatly impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic. Many services were closed for months, losing critical staff and clients. Attempts at reopening the system once the vaccination was available have been difficult and 18-months after all closing, most are still struggling to remain open with less than 50% of their needed staff. This has resulted in less than 30% of clients being able to participate in programs and activities, causing frustration for consumers, their families and caregivers. Those programs that are open are affected by the cycle of services opening, closing, restarting and then closing again, due to continued Coronavirus exposures. This cycle and uncertainty is affecting the emotional, social and physical health of clients, their families, service providers and their staff.

FNRC hopes to alleviate the stress to programs and service providers that are impacted by the most regulations, and who have high levels of unvaccinated direct care staff. We are establishing a Coronavirus Wellness Project that provides funds to service providers to support their staff and to retain skilled and valued employees. **Adult Day Programs, Residential Providers and SLS providers** can access Coronavirus Wellness Project funds by submitting a one-page Coronavirus Wellness Project proposal to FNRC Executive Staff for review and approval. FNRC's Executive Staff will review provider proposals every 2 weeks and will determine which projects are approved for funding. Providers will have up to 120 days to complete the project activities. Service Providers who serve 50 clients or less are eligible for up to \$5,000.00, and Providers who serve 51+ clients are eligible for up to \$10,000.00.

Proposals should be for costs associated with resources to counter misinformation about vaccines which could include guest speakers, trainings, posters, stickers, fact sheets, etc.; costs for employee retention programs (with retention of at least 6 months); for team building exercises, retreats, meetings, etc.; costs related to mandated vaccinations or weekly testing, and more. The proposals should demonstrate

how these activities are needed for the agency due to changing environments and services impacted by Coronavirus. Proposals that are accepted will be responsible for providing receipts with their billing for all employee or resource costs incurred during the wellness project.

Coronavirus Wellness Project proposals will be accepted effective September 1, 2021 and total funding for all projects is \$200,000.00. Proposals will be accepted until the total funds are spent. Proposals will be accepted on a first come basis, and Far Northern Regional Center reserves the right to reject any proposal that does not address wellness issues related to Coronavirus, or does not meet the scope of FNRC's Coronavirus Wellness Projects. FNRC reserves the right to implement any rate adjustment and changes authorized or mandated by the State of California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) affecting the terms of this Agreement.

Each provider may propose one Coronavirus Wellness Project per corporate agency.

Each provider must become vendored under Service Code 103 – Specialized Health, Treatment and Training Services to access project funding.

Under Service Code 103, the vendor provides, or obtains healthcare services for which there is not an existing Title 17 service code, and that is deemed necessary by a health care professional to implement an objective in the consumer's IPP. Services include, but are not limited to: activities that increase or maintain a consumer's or staff's health, healthcare training for consumers and staff, submitting or shipping of medical samples for testing, vaccination incentives, and more. Vendors shall ensure that trainers are credentialed and/or licensed by the State of California to practice in the field, if required.